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Slain Church Founder Planned Film on CIA Drug Experiment

LOS ANGELES

George Peters, the Church of Naturalism founder who was murdered at its Hollywood Hills compound a week ago, had been working on a film in which he claimed involvement in CIA drug experiments, a newspaper reported Sunday.

The Los Angeles Herald Examiner said Peters had for several years been working with church secretary Susan Shore on the film about a Central Intelligence Agency mind-control program called MK ULTRA that he claimed to have been involved in.

"I was writing the story of his life prior to the founding of the church, when he was supposedly one of the people with whom the CIA was doing a lot of experimentation with drugs," Ms. Shore told the newspaper. "We were going to make a film that was going to expose what the government was doing back in the early 1960s."

Ms. Shore told the newspaper she began taking notes from Peters on MK ULTRA in 1977.

Peters, 43, and church treasurer James Patrick Henneberry, 31, were found slain Nov. 6 in one of two houses in the church's barb wire-ringed, six-acre hilltop complex. Both had been beaten and shot. Police have made no arrests in the murders.

The Church of Naturalism grew out of a 1960s drug counseling program Peters ran in Chicago.

MK ULTRA was the last code the CIA gave to its experiments in using drugs, including LSD, to try to control human behavior. The program began in 1949 and continued through 1964. According to congressional testimony in 1977 by former CIA Director Stansfield Turner, the agency sponsored 149 projects on methods ranging from drugs to magic.

Universities, foundations, hospitals, prisons and chemical companies performed the research, largely unaware the projects were sponsored by the CIA.

The newspaper said Peters did not speak in detail of his involvement in the program until The New York Times exposed the program in August 1977.

Peters reportedly outlined his connection with MK ULTRA in July 1981 in a symposium at the University of California at Santa Cruz, titled, "The Social and Cultural Implications of Consciousness Research."

The Herald Examiner said Peters had claimed to have volunteered to be a subject in LSD experiments in 1957 while in the Navy. He also had said he was involved in two other CIA mind-control programs after his discharge from the Navy, the newspaper said.

But the Herald Examiner also said it could not determine whether Peters had ever been in the Navy.

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